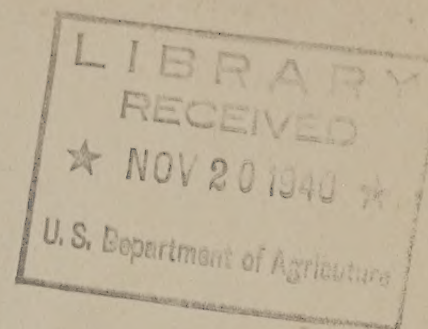


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Bureau of Agricultural Economics



THE POPULATION OF COOS COUNTY, OREGON

By

M. R. Hanger  
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Berkeley, California  
April 9, 1940

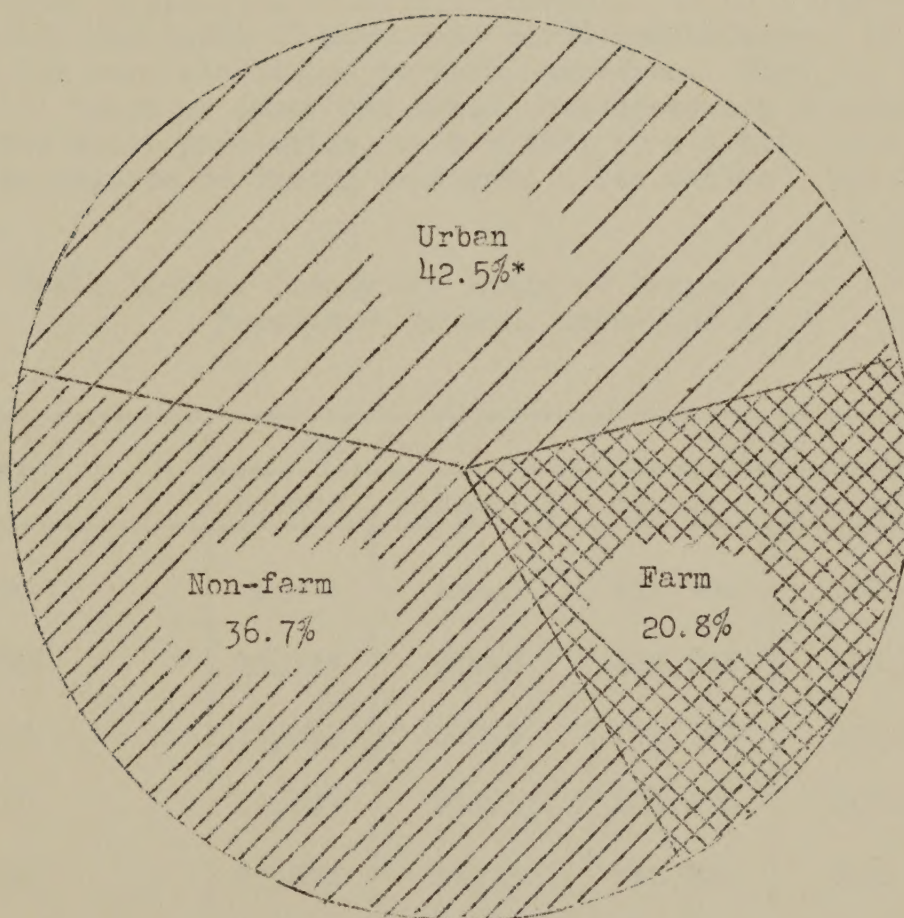




# 1930 POPULATION

Coos County, Oregon

Urban	12,031
Farm	5,893
Non-farm	10,449
Total	28,373



\* Percentages are of total county population.

Source: U. S. Census of Population - 1930.

Figure 1

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## THE POPULATION OF COOS COUNTY, OREGON

By M. R. Hanger, Associate Social Science Analyst  
Division of Farm Population and Rural Welfare

### COMPOSITION AND GROWTH

For Coos County, in 1930, the United States Census of Population reported a total population of 28,373 persons. Of this number, 12,031 lived in cities and towns of more than 2,500 inhabitants. Of the remainder, 10,449 were classified as rural non-farm. That is, this group lived in small towns or other non-urban residences not considered to be farms. Of the whole population, only 5,893, or a little less than 21 percent, were said to be living on farms. (See tables 1 and 2.)

Table 1.-Coos County and State of Oregon:  
Population growth, 1890-1930 a/

Year	Coos County		Oregon	
	Number	Percent <u>b/</u>	Number	Percent
1890	8,874	100.0	317,704	100.0
1900	10,324	116.5	413,586	130.3
1910	17,959	202.5	672,765	212.1
1920	22,257	250.7	783,389	247.0
1930	28,373	319.8	953,786	301.1

a/ U. S. Census of Population, 1930.

b/ Percentages are of 1890 populations.





Table 2.-Coos County and State of Oregon:  
Urban and rural population, 1920-1930 <sup>a/</sup>

Year	Urban		Rural		Rural-farm		Rural-non-farm	
	Number	Pct. <sup>b/</sup>	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.
COOS COUNTY								
1920	7,302	32.8	14,955	67.2	---	---	---	---
1930	12,031	42.5	16,342	57.5	5,893	20.8	10,449	36.7
OREGON								
1920	391,019	49.9	392,370	50.1	212,009	27.0	180,361	23.0
1930	489,746	51.3	464,040	48.7	221,545	23.4	242,495	25.3

<sup>a/</sup> U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1930.

<sup>b/</sup> Percentages are of the total State and county population for the years 1920 and 1930 respectively.

Although Coos County was considerably less urban than the State as a whole, yet in 1930, more than 42 percent of its population was living in urban places of more than 2,500 inhabitants. This represents a shift of about 10 percent of the population group from rural to urban during the decade 1920-30.

The county, as well as the State of Oregon, showed one population characteristic commonly found in areas of relatively recent settlement. There were more males than females, this disparity in Coos County being increasingly apparent in the age-groups above 35 years. (See table 3.) This difference can probably be explained largely in terms of the relatively greater mobility of men during the past decades. Young men tended to migrate in search of employment, whereas women of the same age groups remained in their homes in areas of earlier settlement. Such a preponderance of males in adult years would appear to indicate the presence of considerable numbers of unmarried men, with the accompanying social problems.





Table 3.-Coos County: Age-sex distribution of population, 1930 <sup>a/</sup>

Age group	Percent	Total	Male	Female
Total	100.0	28,373	15,175	13,198
Under 5	7.9	2,354	1,186	1,168
5 - 9	9.3	2,626	1,283	1,343
10 - 14	9.8	2,780	1,390	1,390
15 - 19	9.3	2,628	1,347	1,281
20 - 24	8.7	2,475	1,257	1,244
25 - 34	15.4	4,374	2,299	2,075
35 - 44	14.3	4,048	2,205	1,843
45 - 54	11.9	3,362	1,944	1,388
55 - 64	7.7	2,165	1,275	890
65 - over	5.5	1,550	959	591
Unknown	---	11	6	5

<sup>a/</sup> U. S. Census of Population, 1930.

The population of the county in 1930 was somewhat younger than the population of the State. (See table 4.) Over 36 percent of the inhabitants of Coos County were less than 20 years of age, while for Oregon about 33 percent were found to be below that age. On the other hand, over 28 percent of the people of Oregon were past 45 years, while 25 percent of those in Coos County had reached this age.

Table 4.-Coos County and State of Oregon: Age distribution of population, 1930 <sup>a/</sup>

Age group	Coos County	Oregon
	Percent	Percent
Under 5	7.9	7.4
5 - 9	9.3	8.9
10 - 14	9.8	9.0
15 - 19	9.3	9.2
20 - 24	8.7	8.5
25 - 34	15.4	15.5
35 - 44	14.3	15.2
45 - 54	11.9	11.9
55 - 64	7.6	7.9
65 - over	5.5	6.5

<sup>a/</sup> U. S. Census of Population, 1930.

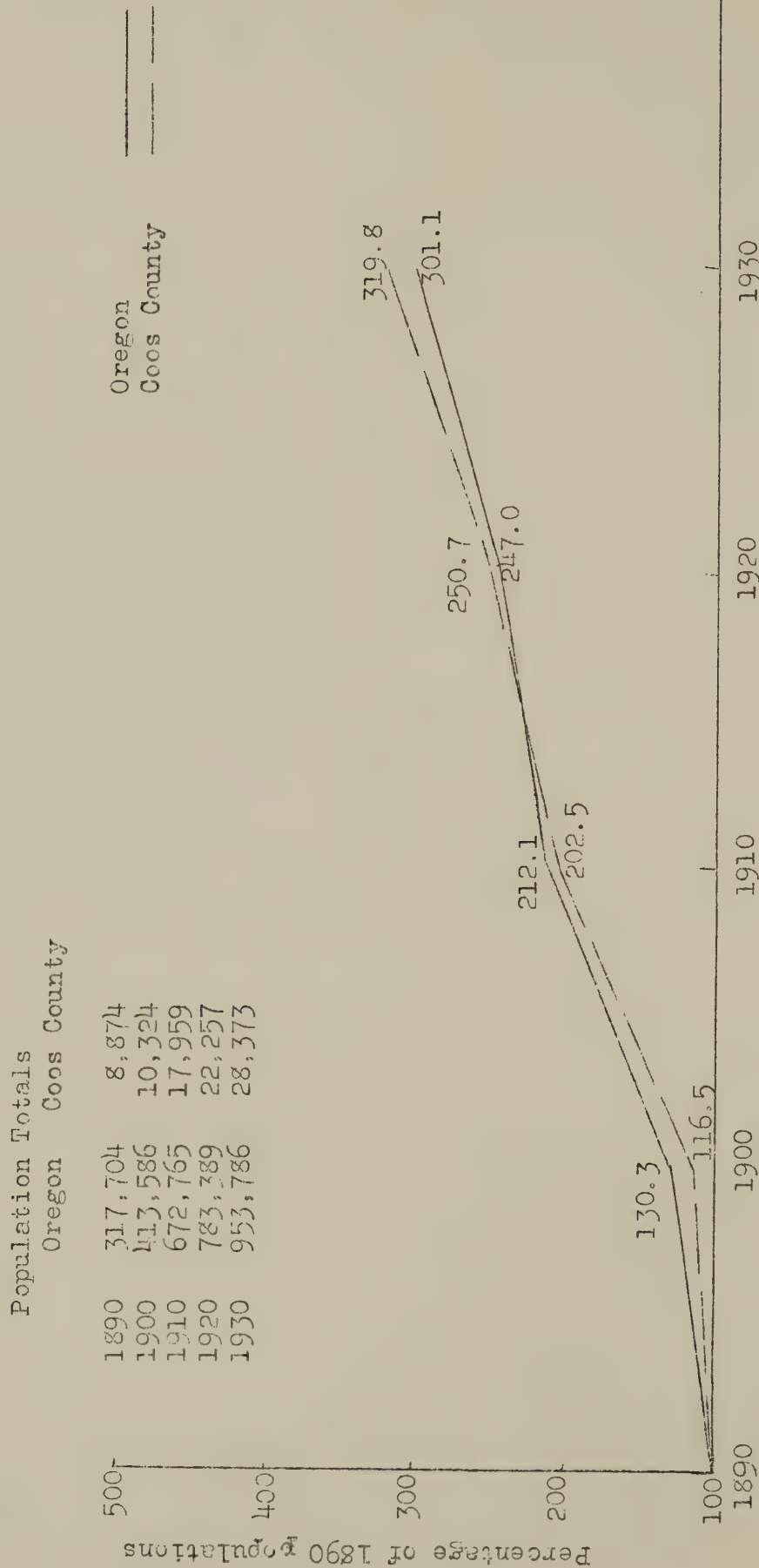






# POPULATION TREND 1890-1930

## Oregon and Coos County



Source: U. S. Census of Population - 1930.

Figure 2



Age-group distributions of population are sometimes highly significant for planning purposes in that they may indicate major social problems to be expected in a particular area. If the young predominate in population, as they appear to do in Coos County, problems of maintaining and increasing school facilities may be expected. If, conversely, there is more than the usual proportion of elderly people, as compared with those in the productive years from 20 to 55, then relatively high expenditures for old-age relief, indigent care, and public-expense hospitalization may reasonably be anticipated.

Over 99 percent of the county's 1930 population was reported as being of the white race, with 8 percent being foreign born. This represents an extraordinarily high homogeneity of racial composition. <sup>1/</sup> The rural population, also in common with the whole county and the State, reported an unusually low proportion of non-whites and of foreign-born whites. (See table 5.)

Table 5.-Coos County: Rural-farm and rural non-farm population by sex, nativity, and race, 1930 <sup>a/</sup>

Item	Sex		Native white	Foreign white	Negro	Other
	Male	Female				
Rural farm	1,435	1,022	2,033	258	10	156
Rural-non-farm	1,879	1,232	2,501	241	8	361
Total	3,314	2,254	4,534	499	18	517

<sup>a/</sup> U. S. Census of Population, 1930.

Coos County's growth has been almost identical in its proportions with that of Oregon (see table 1). In 1890, less than 8,900 inhabitants were reported in the county. By 1910 the figure had risen to almost 19,000, and in 1930, the count approached 28,500. Thus, in common with the State, Coos County had a rapid early growth. In more recent years, however, it showed a tendency to grow much more slowly. Its most rapid growth occurred during the decade 1900-1910.

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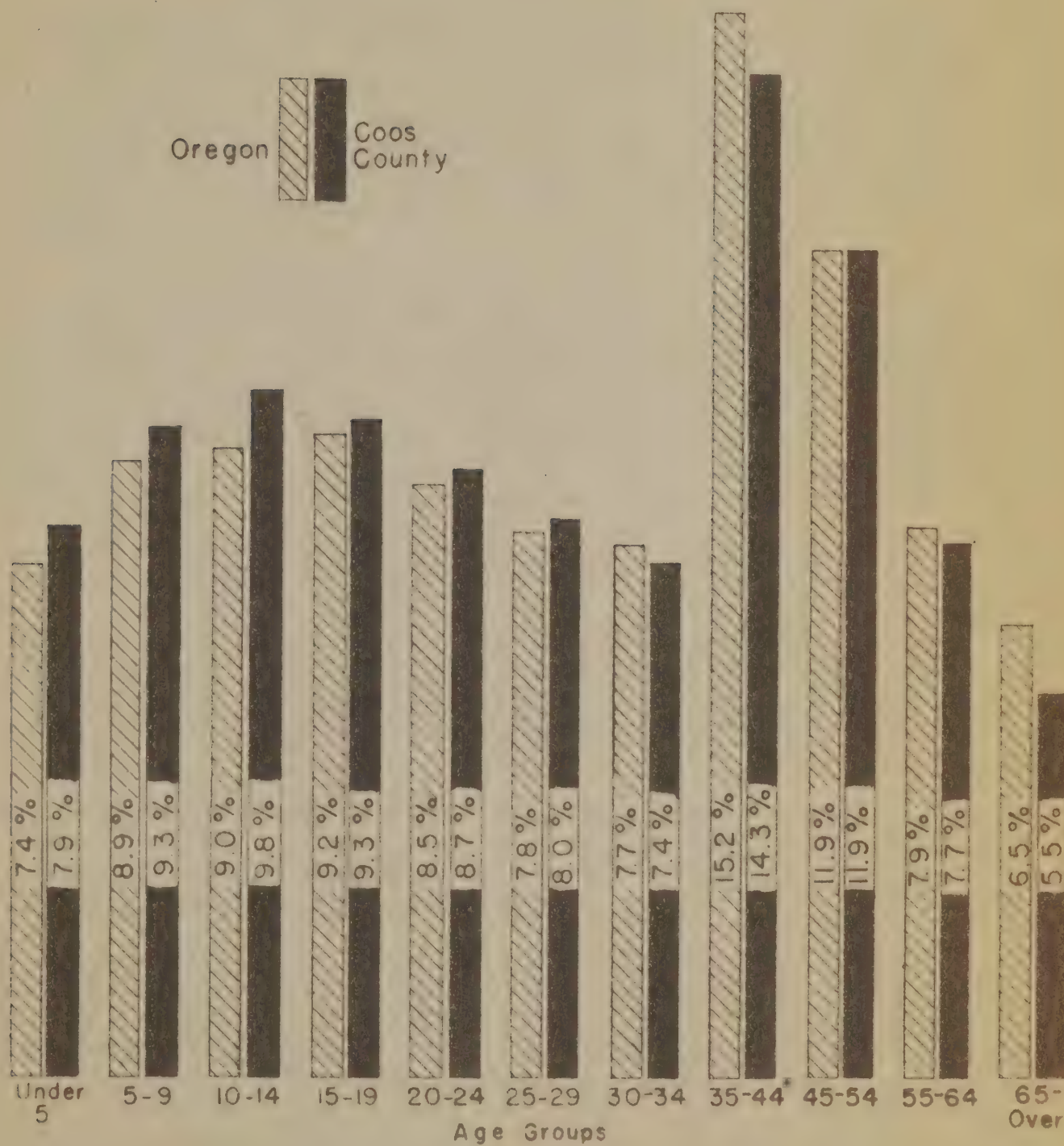
<sup>1/</sup> United States Census of Population, 1930.





# AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION 1930

## OREGON AND COOS COUNTY



\*Beginning at this point the Census doubles the number of years in the age groups.

Source: U.S. Census of Population - 1930

Figure 3





The importance of migration in this population growth is illustrated by a recent study of population trends in Oregon made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Using a method based on births and deaths among natives and non-natives living in Oregon in 1920, the Bureau arrived at an estimate of 63,000 as the probable natural increase in the population of Oregon during the decade between 1920 and 1930, had there been no migration during the 10 years.

The Census indicated, however, that the State's population had actually increased about 171,000 during that period. Therefore, it is estimated that there must have been a net in-migration of about 108,000. But during that period, it is estimated further that a net out-migration of 50,000 Oregonians to other States occurred. This out-migration must have been offset by additional immigration to bring the total 1930 population up to the census figure. Hence, the total migration into the State appears to have been about 158,000, or 16.5 percent of the State's 1930 total population.

With some reservations as to the accuracy of such a method when applied to a population area as small as a county, a somewhat comparable estimate of the rate of natural increase can be made for Coos County for the 1930-1940 decade. Such an estimate indicates that without in-migration or out-migration during the decade, the county population would have increased about 2,100, bringing about a 1940 population of 30,600. But the school survey conducted in 1939 indicates that approximately 4,300 new residents had moved from other States into the county since 1930.

Addition of the 2,100 attributable to the natural increase and the estimated 4,300 immigrants indicates about 6,400 new inhabitants in Coos County since 1930. But this figure cannot be used as an estimate of 1940 population because it does not allow for any deduction for that unknown number of persons who moved out of Coos County during the decade. Nor does it include those who may have moved into the county since 1930 from within the State of Oregon and who were consequently not covered in the school survey.

The analysis up to this point has been concerned primarily with the composition and growth of the county population as a whole. A more important classification, for purposes of land use planning, however, is that of persons engaged in agricultural pursuits.

Of approximately 12,000 persons engaged in gainful occupations in the county in 1930, not quite 1,900, or slightly more than 15 percent, were in agriculture (see table 6). Of these, 1,171 were classified as operators--owners or tenants. Within this operator group, 18 percent, or 211 persons, were tenants. <sup>1/</sup> This percentage of tenancy was slightly lower than that for Oregon as a whole.

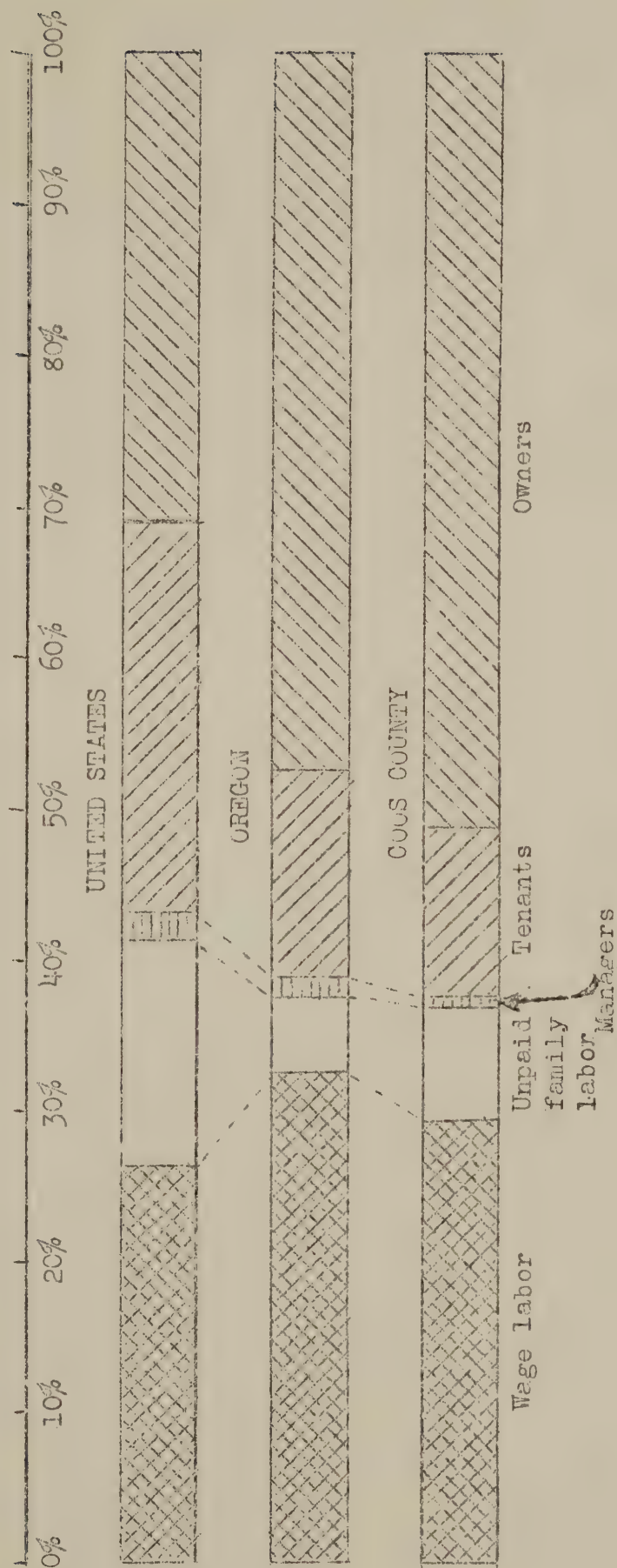
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<sup>1/</sup> Special Report: United States Bureau of the Census.



# OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF GAINFULLY EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE - 1930

United States, Oregon, and Coos County



Source: U. S. Census of Population - 1930.

Figure 4





Table 6.-Coos County and State of Oregon: Occupational distribution of persons engaged in agriculture, 1930 <sup>a/</sup>

Occupations	Coos County		Oregon	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All occupations	1,877	100.0	81,819	100.0
Operators	1,171	62.5	49,973	61.1
Managers: foremen	7	0.4	921	1.3
Farm laborers	696	37.1	31,015	37.9
Wage laborers	550	29.4	26,797	32.8
Unpaid laborers	146	7.7	4,218	5.1

<sup>a/</sup> U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1930.

Managers, foremen, or other salaried operators, seven in number, formed only four-tenths of 1 percent of the agricultural group.

Not quite 30 percent of those in agriculture were wage workers. This is slightly below the Oregon figure, but about 3 percent above that for the United States. Unpaid family labor was slightly more prevalent in Coos County than in the State, but only about half as frequent as in the whole United States.

Thus, the 1930 Census showed Coos County to have a relatively high percentage of farm ownership as compared with both State and Nation. The agricultural group dependent on wages was a somewhat higher proportion, but on the other hand, slightly lower than for all of Oregon.

Another distinction which, in the county as well as the State, is important to planning, is the question of the economic and social status of farm operators. While no direct index is available, a knowledge of the gross productivity, in money terms, of the farms in the county should be of some assistance. (See table 7.) It should be borne in mind, however, that gross product figures indicate merely the scale of operation, but give no information as to whether or not that operation was conducted at a profit or loss.





Table 7.-Coos County and State of Oregon: All farms classified by value of all products sold, traded, or used by operator's family, 1929 <sup>a/</sup>

Value of gross product	Coos County		Oregon	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under \$ 250	78)		4,342)	
250 - 399	41)	41.7	4,063)	41.3
400 - 599	203)		5,232)	
600 - 999	172)		7,786)	
1,000 - 2,499	351	29.7	15,555	29.9
2,500 - 3,999	181	15.3	6,712	12.9
4,000 - 5,999	88	7.4	3,825	7.4
6,000 - 9,999	55	4.6	2,482	4.8
10,000 - 19,999	12	1.0	1,360	2.6
20,000 - over	2	0.2	601	1.2

<sup>a/</sup> U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1930.

In 1930, 27 percent of all farms in Coos County were reported to have had gross products in 1929 of less than \$600. Almost 42 percent, or 494 farms, produced less than a gross of \$1,000. At the other end of the scale stood about 70 farms that had a gross of more than \$6,000.

Regardless of whether or not profits were made on these farms, such a spread in gross product seems to indicate the breadth of range to be found in the economic and social problems and interests represented in the group classed as operators. Moreover, all this says nothing as to the even wider divergences in social and economic status to be found between operator and wage-labor classifications.

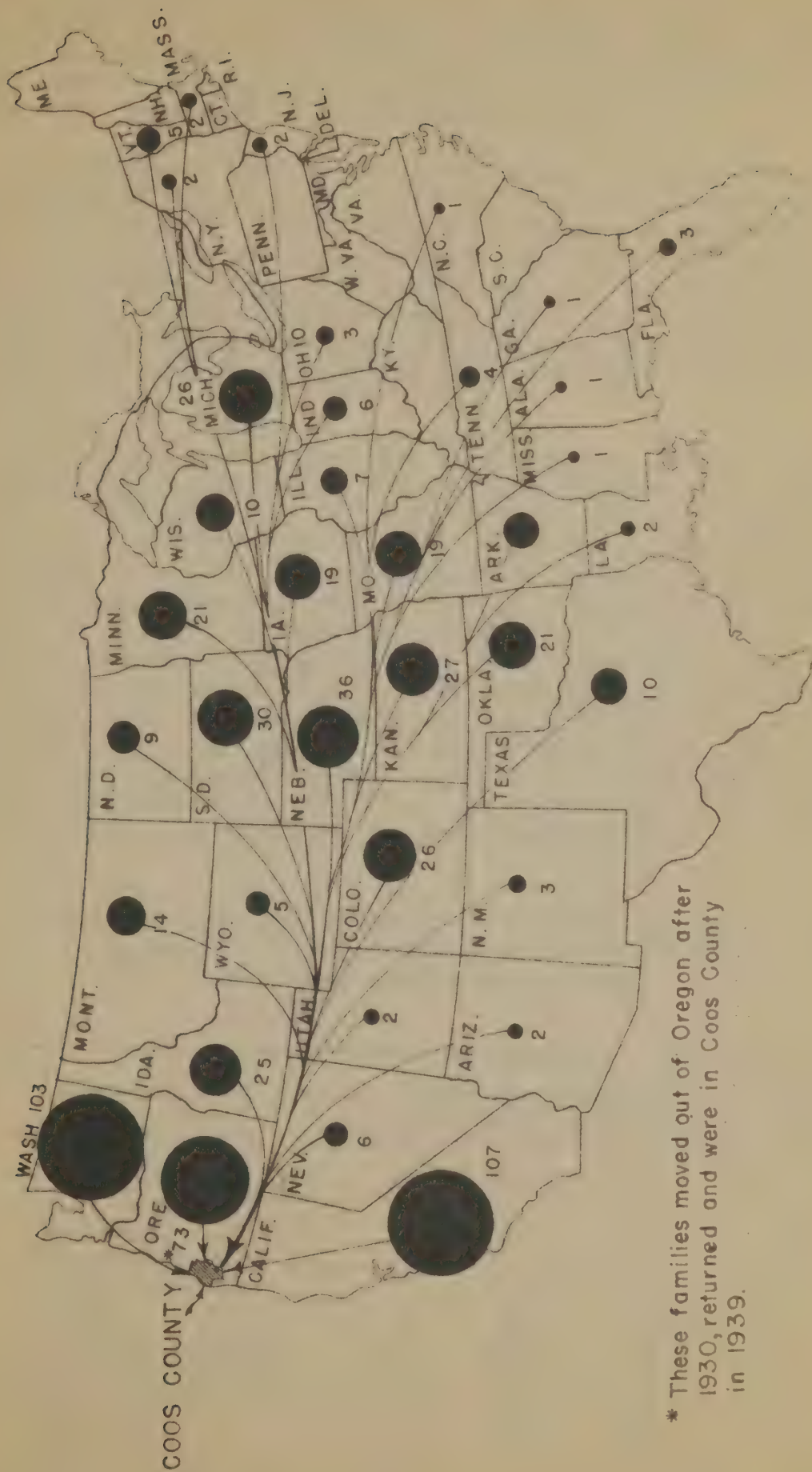
#### MIGRATION

Light on the nature of the important migration into Coos County is shed by the school survey conducted by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Farm Security Administration in collaboration with school authorities of Oregon.

The migration of the past decade which appears to be merely the most recent phase of what might be called an historic process, has been widely publicized and has come to be regarded as a political as well as an economic and social problem. This is probably the result of the prevalence of depressed conditions both in the areas in which the migration originated and in the States of destination.

To find some indications of the magnitude, sources, composition, and occupational character of this influx of new population, the Bureau





\* These families moved out of Oregon after 1930, returned and were in Coos County in 1939.

COOS COUNTY: SOURCES OF MIGRATION INTO COOS COUNTY 1930-1939





of Agricultural Economics conducted a survey of migration by means of a questionnaire distributed throughout the public schools of the State in May 1939. Under supervision of the teachers, these questionnaires were filled out by children whose parents had moved into the State since 1930. Questionnaires from brothers and sisters were assembled into combined family returns. From the mass of data so assembled it has become possible to make certain significant estimates.

The survey enumerated 656 families which had moved from other States into Coos County after 1929 and were still there in the spring of 1939. The returns indicated that at least 914 children of migrant families were enrolled in Coos County schools. Then, assuming that school children will be found in the same proportion among the newcomers as they were in the States from which they came, a rough estimate of the number of migrants can be made. According to this estimate, approximately 4,300 people moved to Coos County from other States during the years 1930-39.

Most of these newcomers have been absorbed into the commerce and industry of Coos County. Only a comparatively few have gone into agriculture. (See table 8.) While about 22 percent were reported to have been engaged in farming in the States from which they came, less than 11 percent were said to be in agriculture in Coos County. The survey probably under-enumerates the farm group since part-time farmers would tend to be returned according to their off-farm occupation. Of these incoming family heads, 60 percent had been nonagricultural industrial workers, classified as skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled labor. In Coos County, almost three-fourths of the group were reported in these categories. Such an occupational distribution would appear to contradict the widespread conception that the migration of the past decade has been largely agricultural in character. It appears rather to have been composed of all occupational groups found in the States of origin.

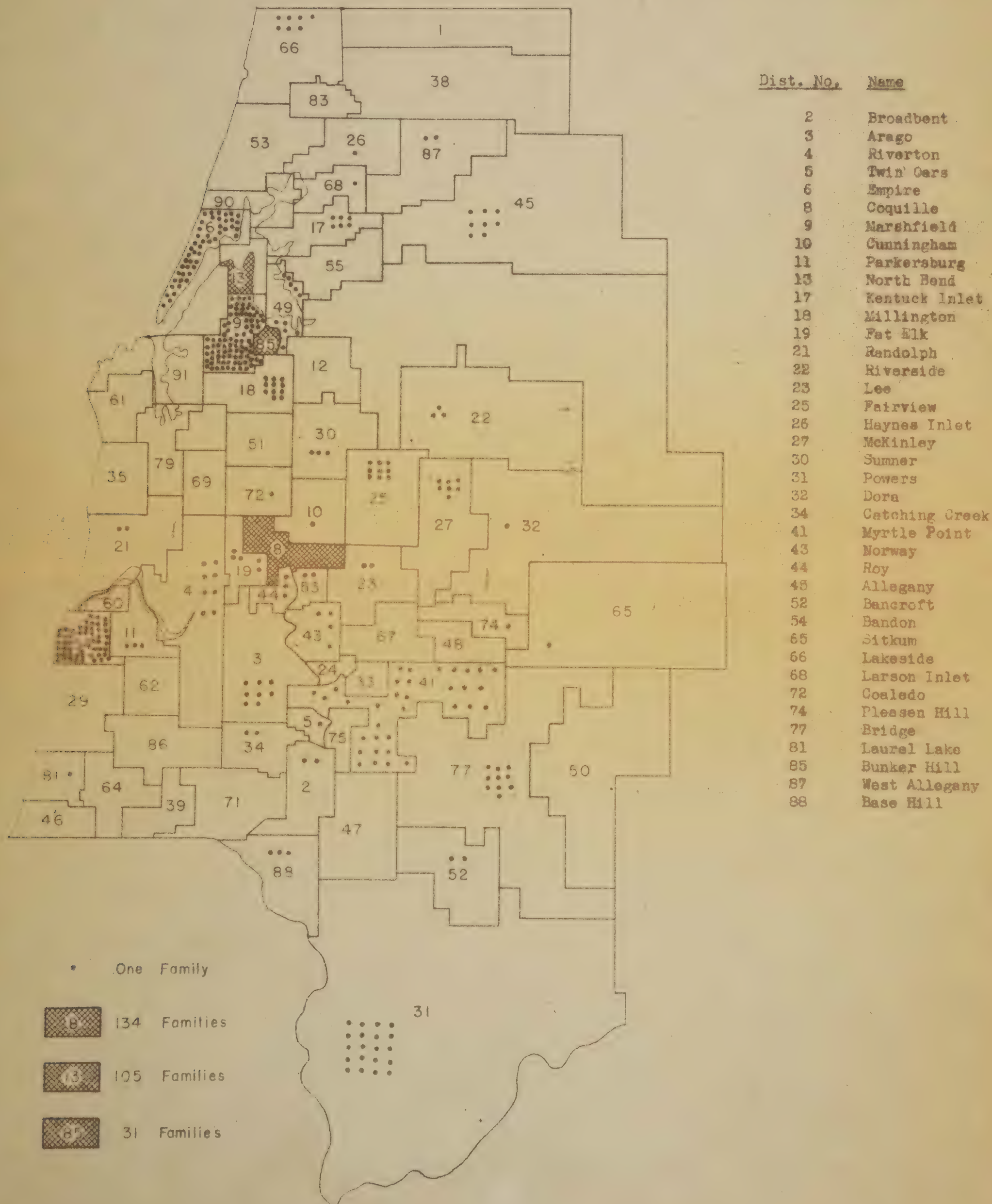
Table 8.-Families enumerated in Coos County migration survey:  
Classified by occupation of male parents before  
entry into Oregon and in 1939

Occupational groups	Before coming to Oregon		In Coos County 1939	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Number reporting	534	100.0	495	100.0
Professional	16	3.0	12	2.4
Farmers and farm laborers	117	21.9	53	10.7
Proprietors	42	7.9	41	8.3
Clerks	30	5.6	24	4.8
Foremen: skilled	105	19.7	91	18.4
Semi-skilled labor	115	21.5	137	27.7
Other labor	103	19.3	128	25.9
Servants	6	1.2	9	1.8





# COOS COUNTY: SETTLEMENT OF REPORTED MIGRANTS BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS



Source: Coos County Sup't. of Schools

Figure 6



Most numerous were reports of families coming from other States on the Pacific Coast. (See table 9.) In all, 107 families were reported to have been in California in 1930; 103 had come from Washington; 25 from Idaho; and 73 reported that they had lived in Oregon in 1930, had moved out of the State, and had returned, taking up residence in Coos County. Altogether, about 47 percent of the migrants came from the Pacific Coast and Idaho.

Table 9.-Families enumerated in Coos County migration survey:  
Classified by State of residence in 1930

State	Number	Percent
Total	656	100.0
California	107	16.3
Idaho	25	3.8
Oregon	73	11.1
Washington	103	15.7
Colorado	26	3.9
Iowa	19	2.9
Kansas	27	4.1
Michigan	26	4.0
Minnesota	21	3.2
Missouri	19	2.9
Montana	14	2.1
Nebraska	36	5.5
Oklahoma	21	3.2
South Dakota	50	4.6
All other	119	16.7

The Northern Plains States of Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota were the former homes of 123 families, or nearly 19 percent of all families enumerated. Oklahoma and Texas contributed less than 5 percent of the Coos County newcomers. All told, 36 States and 2 foreign countries were reported as points of origin for one or more families.

The year 1936 marked the peak of migration into Coos County for the decade. That year, 132 of the enumerated families arrived in the county. Entries the following year were almost equally numerous; 1936 and 1937 together saw the arrival of 262 families, or 40 percent of the enumerated group. (See table 10.)





# OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS OF MIGRANT FAMILY HEADS BEFORE COMING TO OREGON AND REPORTED IN COOS COUNTY - 1939

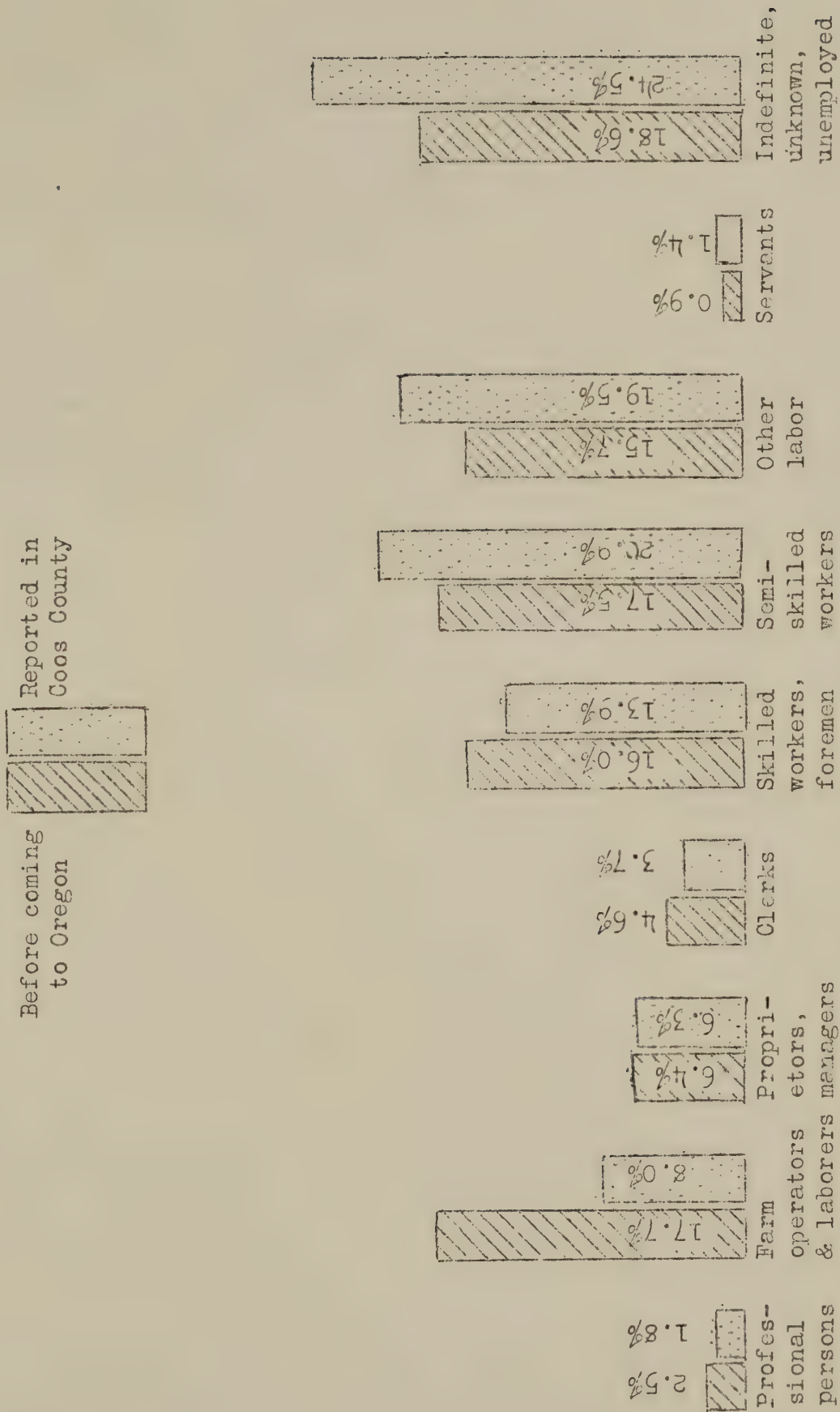


Figure 7





Of the reported families, more than 80 percent settled in Coos County during the same year they entered Oregon. This would appear to indicate that most of the newcomers were moving to specific destinations, making few or no intermediate stops along the way. Such indications are contrary to the popular assumptions that the migrants drift from place to place, rarely putting down roots or establishing permanent residence. Bearing on this point, seven-eighths of the enumerated families had been in Coos County 2 years or more at the time the survey was taken and 25 percent had lived in the county more than 5 years.

It is estimated that 914 children (belonging to families that had moved into Coos County from other States after 1929) were attending grade and high schools of Coos County in the spring of 1939. The county schools were calculated to have an average daily attendance of 5,914 during the school year of 1938-39. Children of the newcomers group, therefore, constituted slightly more than 15 percent of the school attendance in the county.





Table 10.-Families enumerated in Coos County migration survey: Classified by year of arrival in Oregon and length of time in Coos County

Year of arrival in Oregon	Number reporting	Percent	Time in Coos County									
			Under one year	One year	Two years	Three years	Four years	Five years	Six years	Seven years	Eight years	Nine years
Total	645	100.0	14	101	130	132	89	64	27	29	36	22
1930	32	5.0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	2	3	22
1931	46	7.1	1	2	1	3	0	3	2	1	33	
1932	42	6.5	1	4	3	4	0	3	1	26		
1933	39	6.0	0	1	8	3	1	2	24			
1934	73	11.3	1	1	4	4	7	54				
1935	100	15.5	0	3	11	6	80					
1936	122	18.9	1	6	5	110						
1937	106	16.4	1	8	95							
1938	77	11.9	1	76								
1939	8	1.2	8									

